

**Education Outcomes Task Force Annual Report  
Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana**

**Objective #1: Improve transitions for youth from DOC and DCS to other agencies (BDDS, mental health) and to community including reentry to school.**

**Recommendations to the Commission:**

- Incentivize transitional programs that are willing to work with system involved students by designating funding to follow them back to their communities.
- Incentivize traditional public schools willing to enroll system involved students into alternative programs by allowing them to be reimbursed for lost funding if the student makes it to graduation without re-offending.
- Allow students to re-enter through alternative transition programs that will allow them to earn credits in the middle of a semester.
- Continue to utilize the Education Outcomes Task Force to provide input and guidance to the IDOC/Division of Youth Services with the implementation of the Action Plan developed through the OJJDP Second Chance Act Comprehensive Juvenile Reentry Systems Reform Planning Program
- Utilize the Indiana Department of Education's "School Climate and Cultural Awareness" web-site to link parents, schools, and community stakeholders to best-practice and other "vetted" resources.
- Assist schools to leverage technology to enroll students in credit recovery courses.

**Objective #2: Address quality/consistency of education in detention**

**Recommendations to the Commission:**

- Continue to utilize the Education Outcomes Task Force to provide input and guidance to IDOC/Division of Youth Services and other stakeholders in addressing quality/consistency of education in detention. Education Outcomes Task Force members assigned to this sub-committee include Kellie Whitcomb, from IDOC/DYS, Sean Coleman, Director of the Indiana Juvenile Detention Association, Lenee Reedus, from the Indiana Department of Education, and Laurie Elliott, from the Youth L.A.W. Team. Juvenile Detention Standards have been revised and are in the process of official approval, including a revision of the standards for the provision of education services to youth in detention.
- Identify and leverage funding to provide access to technology to ensure that youth in detention are able to remain actively engaged in educational programming that will allow them to progress toward achieving a high school credential.

**Objective #3: Increase school stability and decrease absenteeism**

**Recommendations for the Commission:**

- The Education Outcomes Task Force is studying this topic and will provide updates to the Commission. Plans include the following:
  - Study existing absenteeism and truancy strategies being used successfully in Allen and Lake Counties
  - Research best practices utilized in other jurisdictions to address this issue.

**Objective #4: Increase mental health services in schools, including focus on early identification and intervention.**

**Recommendations for the Commission:**

- Partner with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to provide a training path for public school administrators and school resource officers to effectively manage students with a mental health diagnoses (this could be done through the existing Crisis Intervention Training).
- Establish professional development requirements or standards for school counselors that emphasize improving skills and knowledge related to providing effective school counseling or guidance.

In the coming year, further action to be taken by the Education Outcomes Task Force, with updates provided to the Commission:

- Identify ways to emphasize the connection between education outcomes and the mental health status of children and youth.
- Study the need for more school counselors and school social workers, and clearly delineate the roles of each.

**Objective #5: Increase coordination regarding education among DOE, DCS, DWD, Probation and School Districts**

**Recommendations for the Commission:**

- Address questions regarding the laws surrounding expunging juvenile records. Address the need to educate youth, parents, guardians, and employers regarding whether or not a youth has to disclose a criminal background (juvenile record) when applying for a job.

In the coming year, further action to be taken by the Education Outcomes Task Force, with updates provided to the Commission, include:

- Identify ways to keep students on a high school diploma track as long as possible.
- Continue to connect at-risk youth with DWD JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) programs.
- Work with DWD to develop and align programs to the new federal guidelines established through WIOA which include the requirement to provide services to out of school youth up to the age of 24. DWD is currently working with staff from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and IDOC/Division of Youth Services, along with DOE and DCS, to identify the population needing these supports.

**Additional Recommendation for the Commission:**

- Establish a Sub-Committee of the Education Task Force to address School Discipline and Climate. This sub-committee would help develop recommendations and strategies to reduce the use of exclusionary school discipline and school based arrests, improve student engagement and improve school climate so school throughout the state are safe and positive learning environments for all students. This would include the study of cross-systems collaboration, community engagement, data specific to school discipline, school policies and funding streams, and culturally responsive best-practices.

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Education Outcomes Task Force